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A LETTER  
ON  
PAUPERISM AND CRIME,

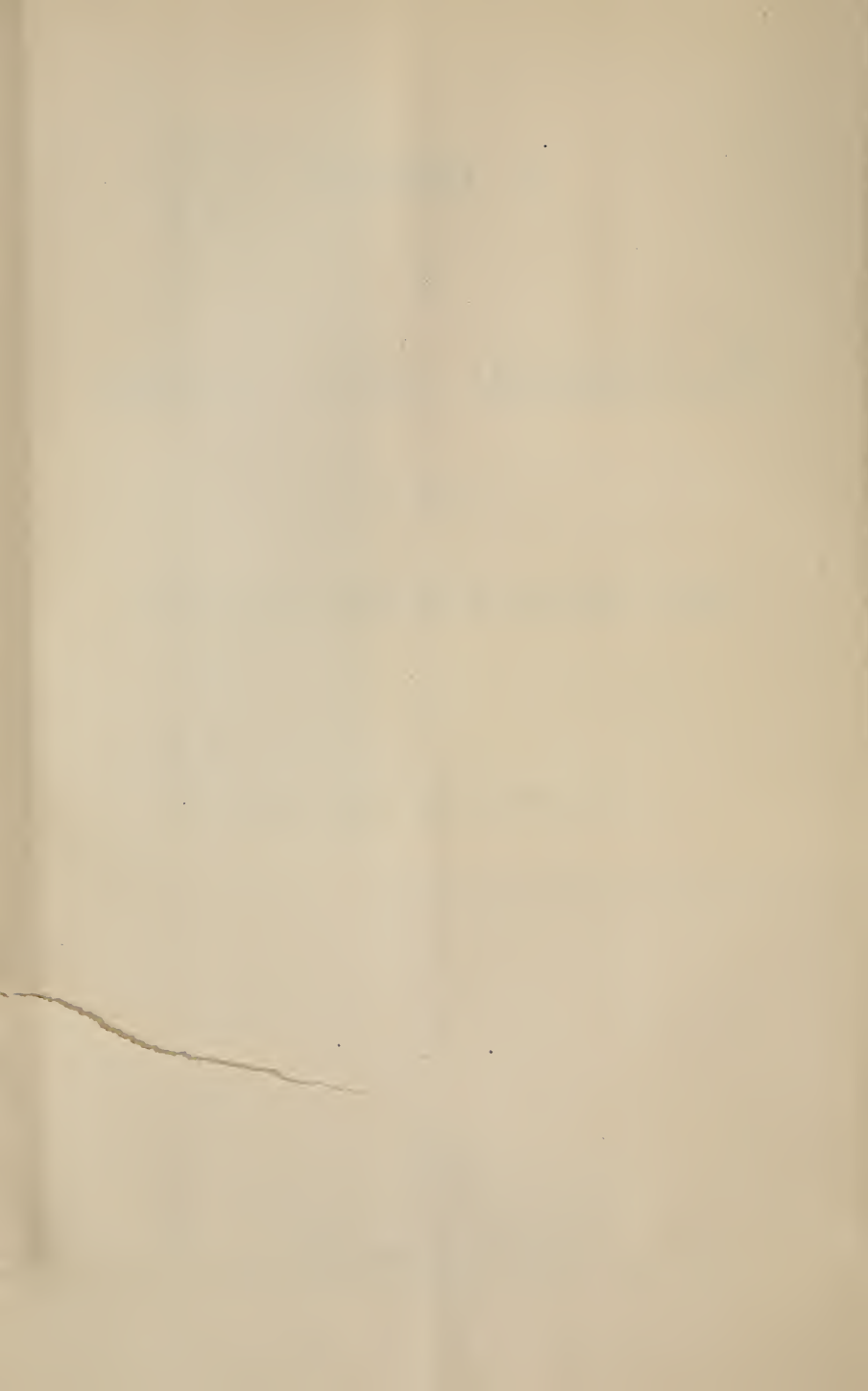
ADDRESSED

To the Members of the House of Commons

BY

A GUARDIAN OF THE POOR.

London,  
RIVINGTONS, WATERLOO PLACE;  
HIGH STREET, | TRINITY STREET,  
Oxford. | Cambridge.  
1869.



## A LETTER,

&c.

GENTLEMEN,

To what cause are we to attribute the immense amount of Pauperism and Crime, amongst the industrial classes, at the present time? I answer, primarily, to the maudlin philanthropy which characterizes the community at large, in regard to both these questions.

It is asserted, with a confidence that will admit of no contradiction, that A MAN HAS A RIGHT TO LIVE, which, when interpreted, means that every man who is too debased to earn his own livelihood has a right to live at the expense of his neighbours. The assertion, however, is contradicted, in the most unmistakable manner, by the highest of all authority. We read, *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat*<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the Apostle asserts, that, if a man is a lazy, idle vagabond, you may, *with a clear conscience*, leave him to starve; nay, more, THE ALMIGHTY COMMANDS YOU TO DO SO.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Thess. iii. 10.



Look, again, at the multiplicity of our, so-called, Charitable Institutions. Hear what the Rev. W. Stone, formerly Rector of Christ Church, Spitalfields, and now Canon of Canterbury Cathedral, says, in connexion with them. *The poor in London may be born for nothing, nursed for nothing, clothed for nothing, educated for nothing : they may be put out apprentice for nothing, and have medicine and medical attendance all their lives for nothing. The pauper is thus born, nursed, clothed, fed, educated, established and physicked all for nothing. He begins a pauper and dies a pauper, and at the expense of the parish he is provided with a shroud, coffin, pall and burial-ground. He says further, I wish it to be understood that I am giving an ORDINARY, not an extraordinary case. I might have included details of a more aggravated and offensive nature, but I have contented myself with describing the extent to which relief may be, and actually is, made to minister to improvidence and dependence.*

Now, how are we to account for a state of things so monstrous, so intensely wicked ; a state of things which, in place of elevating, lowers our fellow-creatures to the level of the very dogs in our kennels ? Easily enough, it seems to the writer. For centuries past the clergy have preached, to satiety, on the text, *He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord ;* while it is doubtful if there is a man living who ever heard a sermon on the text, *If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.* Thus a state of things has been produced which, while it cannot fail to make Angels weep, must cause the evil intelligences to rejoice. It has been well observed that, *nothing can permanently better the condition of the working classes but an*



*increase of prudence.* May it not be asked, is such likely to be begotten while our so-called Charitable Institutions, as also the Poor Law, conspire to teach the working classes that there is no need to make provision for the contingencies of life?

The Poor Law, in place of attempting to save our working classes from pauperism, insists on their being in that disgraceful condition ere it will undertake to help them. Mr. Glen, in his notes on the consolidated orders of the Poor Law Commissioners, says, p. 29, *The function of the Guardians is to relieve destitution actually existing, and not to spend the money of the ratepayers in preventing a person from becoming destitute.*

Again, listen to another of our many mischievous aphorisms. *Charity*, it is said, *cannot be done by deputy.* By charity, be it observed, almsgiving is intended. So far is such from being the case that, the writer feels confident the experience of all those who have practical knowledge of the subject would afford abundant proof that, DIRECT ALMSGIVING is, to the recipients and ultimately to the community, nothing short of a CURSE.

The writer has known of a poor person who, when remonstrated with on the absence of industrial habits, turned on the remonstrant and urged, in excuse, that until emasculated for labour, by UNSOLICITED AID, she had neither sought for nor desired assistance from any one. Subsequent inquiry corroborated the woman's assertion. Doubtlessly there are thousands of similar cases.

The receiver of stolen property is viewed as equally criminal with the thief. In like manner, he who

indulges in the selfish gratification of direct almsgiving should be viewed as sinning, not simply against the unhappy recipient, but also against society generally, and punished as an enemy to the well-being of the community at large.

In London, and in all large towns, it is simply impossible for any person, *unconnected with a methodized system of inquiry*, to secure himself from imposition. Such is not simply the case in reference to the lowest section of the working classes, but equally so in regard to persons whose surroundings would lead to the conclusion they were utterly incapable of such soul debasing hypocrisy.

The question, What are we to do? naturally presents itself. To those who believe, as the writer does, that our Pauperism, and in a great measure Crime, are attributable to our leading vast numbers of the community to become utterly indifferent to all prudential motives, the answer is evident: undo by legislation all which has produced results so calamitous. As a means to that end, the writer would suggest that, the Government forthwith appoint a Commission, composed of practical men, to inquire into the working of all existing charities, and wherever they are found to encourage (directly or indirectly) a leaning on aid other than their own honest exertions, on the part of any of the community, away with them without a moment's hesitation.

Persons who have bequeathed funds for the use of the Poor purposed to benefit, not injure them; their gifts, therefore, should be treated in the spirit in which they were made, not in the *letter* of the deed of conveyance.

As to the disposal of any funds which the Government might see fit, on the recommendation of the Commission, to divert from their present application, there need be no difficulty, as they might form a fund to assist the emigration of our surplus industrial classes and, thus, aid in carrying into execution the second clause of a command, the first of which alone, as a general rule, meets with attention: *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.* In the event of the sums diverted being more than necessary for the purposes of emigration, a portion might be invested to supplement the sums paid in by the working classes to a Deferred Annuities Department. But if required for neither of these purposes, and if no other profitable use could be found for them, they might help to reduce the National Debt and thereby the national burdens.

It is impossible but that the labouring classes will, occasionally, require pecuniary assistance. With the view to such assistance being furnished, free from injury to any one, the writer would suggest that, an office be established in each parish, or district of a parish, where the amount of the population requires it, of every city and town throughout the kingdom. The office should contain—

A LABOUR DEPARTMENT, where those requiring work, as well as those requiring workmen, might register their respective wants.

An association, for the employment of persons temporarily out of work, might very advantageously affiliate itself with this department. It might, even, be found necessary for the department to have an

establishment where temporary employment could be provided.

A DEPOSIT DEPARTMENT, where the working classes might make payments towards Government Deferred Annuities, for the support of their old age—the annuities to be established on a system which would not require the payments to be continued during the time the subscriber might be, from unavoidable causes, out of employ; also, where they might deposit all such sums as they were desirous of investing in the Government Savings' Banks.

AN EMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, where those, of the working classes, wishing to emigrate might make their desires known, and have all the necessary arrangements for their passage to and reception in the Colony made. Agents should be appointed in the Colonies to receive the emigrants, on their arrival, and to assist them in obtaining employment.

The Department and Colonial Agents should be prepared to grant Money Orders, to enable the working classes to remit to or receive from emigrants.

A LOAN DEPARTMENT. This would prove the most important department of the whole, as on its judicious management the existence or non-existence of Pauperism would mainly depend. As a general rule, not a farthing should be ever GIVEN AWAY; but money should be lent, free from interest, and received back at such intervals of time, and in such instalments, as the head of the department ascertains the borrower can pay without inconvenience. Persons should be attached to this department for the purpose of collecting the information necessary to enable it, efficiently, to discharge its most important



duties. They should be men of a character to win the confidence of the people, and capable of advising them under all the ordinary contingencies of life. The information they obtain should be duly recorded for ready reference.

AN EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT. The education of the children of the working classes should be compulsory. It should comprise reading, writing, and the four first rules of arithmetic, together with instruction in a trade or calling for the boys, and needlework for the girls. Parents should be required to contribute a small amount, per child, to the expenses. It should be the duty of the department to secure the services of efficient instructors.

A MEDICAL DEPARTMENT. There should be good medical assistance within easy reach of the people, but all who benefit, therefrom, should contribute a small sum in return for the medicine and attendance received. The remuneration, given by the office to the medical men, should be sufficient to secure the services of gentlemen possessed of sufficient moral courage to act in defiance of the wishes and opinions of malingerers.

The Chiefs and Heads of Departments to be appointed by the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

The Chief and Heads of Departments to form a Board, which should assemble once a week or oftener, for the discussion and settlement of all questions connected with the working of the office.

The expense attending the Offices, in all their Departments, to be met by a rate levied, on the principle of the Income-tax, over the whole kingdom.

No Charitable Societies to be established in a parish without the approval of the Board.

As the Poor Law system now in force promotes Pauperism, it ought to be entirely suppressed.

The Workhouses might be converted into Infirmarys, for incurables of the working classes, or almshouses. The superannuated poor should be enabled to end their days in their own homes, or in such almshouses as it might be found advisable to establish.

As nothing but association, in a family, can prepare children for domestic duties, Orphanages should be suppressed, and the children of the working classes, who are *entire* orphans, should be boarded out with their own class. The sum paid with each child ought to be, not only sufficient for its maintenance, but likewise an ample remuneration for the care and responsibility attending the charge.

Strikes, *being a prolific source of pecuniary distress to the working classes*, should be prohibited by law, and the Government should appoint an officer, of high legal standing, as arbitrator, who should have as his coadjutors, on every occasion of a difference of opinion between the masters and their men, a working man and an employer of labour, whose decision should be final, and capable of being carried into execution, if need be, by the arm of the law.

Just as Pauperism finds its origin, speaking generally, in almsgiving, in like manner Crime, in the majority of instances, is due to Pauperism.

It is suggested that all prisons be reformatory and self-supporting. The mistaken sympathy now so conspicuously displayed in reference to the health

and comfort of prisoners should be laid aside as utterly unbecoming. It is entirely a man's own fault if he finds himself within the four walls of a prison, and in place of making a martyr of him, as though society were in the wrong in placing him there, he should be made to regret the course of conduct which rendered it necessary for the authorities to deprive him of his liberty, and resolve that, if he lives to get free, he will never again so conduct himself as to render a second incarceration necessary.

In place of faring better, working less, and enjoying an amount of protection from the weather unknown to the honest of his class, he should be made to work in all weathers, much harder, and to fare worse. The comfort enjoyed by prisoners is a shame and a disgrace to the nation that allows it, while tens of thousands of its honest poor never know any thing approaching it.

There should be distinct prisons and systems of discipline, for the different classes of criminals; thus, juveniles, vagrants, and those detained pending inquiry, those guilty of misdemeanors, felonies, political offences, &c., &c., should not be kept under the same roof.

Transportation should be re-established.

Tickets of leave should be abolished. Whatever sentence is passed on an adult, ought to be fully worked out.

Every prisoner, on release, to be provided, if necessary, with a situation wherein an honest livelihood could be gained.

A third conviction, for felony, to stamp the con-



victed person as incorrigible, and carry with it a sentence of transportation for life.

The receivers of stolen property and harbourers of known thieves, on conviction, to be considered guilty of felony.

All tramps, and persons who have no ostensible means for gaining an honest livelihood, to be sent to prison, to earn the maintenance requisite for themselves and family, if they have one, and kept there till their friends find suitable employment for them.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

A GUARDIAN.

THE END.







